

Charge of test fee on Timber

†3263. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision to enhance the test fee charged on timber import by fifteen times;

(b) if so, reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have received a demand from timber imports association for keeping the timber out of the definition of plant and also out of the purview of Plant, Flower and Seed Order, 1989 and to remove fee thereon; and

(d) if so, the action and decision taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) Enhancement of fee ordered *vide* Government of India Notification SO 467(E) dated the 16th May 2000 was subsequently moderated and harmonised *vide* Notification No. SO 574(E) dated the 14th June 2000.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Hon'ble Supreme Court of India had passed an Order in response to SLP (CIVIL) No. 1227 of 1990 filed by M/s. Sarda Plywood Ltd. Vs. Union of India and others rejecting contention of the Petitioners to exclude timber logs from the definition of "plant". As such inclusion of timber in the expression "plant" as defined under the Plants, Fruits and Seeds (Regulation of Import into India) Order, 1989 was upheld by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

Vacant Posts of CMD in SFCI

3264. SHRI AMAR SINGH:

SHRIMATI JAYA PRADA NAHATA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the post of MD and Chairman of SFCI has been lying vacant and if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether most of the farms under SFCI are looked after by very junior officer instead of Director level officer as required under the rule and if so, the reasons therefor; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.